

More time?

Yes...no.

More adventure?

Yes...no.

More acceptance?

Yes...no.

More food?

Yes...no.

More drink?

Yes...no.

More admiration?

Yes...no.

So you want more money, sex, time, adventure, acceptance, food, drink, admiration? You want more of all that?

I want more *than* all that.

More *than* all that?

Oh yeah.

You're hard to please.

Silence. No response. Mental wheels spinning. An honest thought is finally given...

I'm impossible to please.

Impossible to please?

Feels that way.

Feels that way?

Yes. Feels unsatisfiable.

Unsatisfiable?

Yes.

Is that a word?

Silence. No response. Mental wheels spinning. An honest thought is finally given...

I don't know.

DEEP DOWN

So this is it?

Twenty-five years of education.

Kindergarten through graduate school.

And this is it.

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I sit in a windowless cube wanting something more.

So this is it?

Twenty-five years of climbing the ladder.

Entry-level clerk to CEO.

And this is it.

I sit in a window-filled office wanting something more.

So this is it?

Twenty-five years of raising children.

Diapers to diplomas.

And this is it.

I sit in a quiet house wanting something more.

So this is it?

Twenty-five years upon twenty-five years upon twenty-five years.

Cradle to the edge of the grave.

And this is it.

I sit in my rocking chair wanting something more.

More?

Yes, more.

More of what?

Honest answer. Uncensored answer. Deep-down-reveal-the-soul-kind-of-answer.

We don't know. We just know we want more.

What's with that? What's with the insatiable hunger for more? If we're to address issues of our heart, if we're to guard our heart as the wellspring of life, we must go toe to toe with this drive, this passion.

ONE THING

Ever read a statement so shocking you're not sure it's true? Maybe it's a statistic. Maybe it's another person's conviction. Maybe it's a perspective on life. Scripture contains a few shocking statements. Some readers embrace them without thinking, but we're a thinking people, and there's an appropriate place for healthy wrestling.

David made a shocking statement. It's one with which we must wrestle.

He was a warrior. He was a poet. He was a leader. He was a musician.

Much of the book we call *Psalms* flowed from David's pen. One such psalm contains a statement that simply must not be missed. We'll take it slowly, in two parts.

David writes this...

One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek... (Psalm 27:4).

One thing. Just one thing.

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With one hand on this statement and the other on our insatiable hunger for more, how can we understand this man's desire for just one thing? As we consider our own list of desires, is it possible to say we really just want one thing? Truly, if his pen were in your hand, would you be able to authentically complete the statement? Might you scratch it out and write *Three things I ask of the Lord*? What could be your one thing? God grants you a wish. What do you wish for? How do you complete the sentence?

One of two things must be true of David. Either he has very low expectations for life. Or if he genuinely just wants one thing, then this one thing he desires is deeper and grander and greater than anything we could ever imagine.

One other thought to consider before we discover David's completion of this phrase: How might "One thing..." relate to "Above all else..."?

It's just a question. No need for an answer. Consider it for a moment, maybe a couple of moments, and file it away. If David was a man who guarded his heart, and if David's heart was one that truly longed for one thing, this one thing must be something he treasured and guarded. If it's his one thing, it's the one thing that truly drives his life; it is his wellspring of life.

One thing...

Just one thing...

How might we complete that phrase...

Let's put the pen back in David's hand and discover his one thing.

One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple (Psalm 27:4).

Low expectations, or is he on to something?

This is one of those places it would be unwise and simplistic to just accept what he says. To accept it without thinking would be to miss something terribly important. Why would David want just one thing, and why is that one thing God himself? To answer these questions we must keep one hand on that insatiable hunger for more, and we must carry an incredibly important question with us. Hold this question close...

Why do we have an insatiable hunger for more?

What's it about? Will we ever be fully satisfied? Will we always long for more? Again, why do we have an insatiable hunger for more? We'll address this slowly and with depth. We'll address it this week and next. For now, let's consider the journey of another one of Scripture's scribes. Let's listen to David's son.

SOLOMON'S QUEST

David had a son. His name was Solomon. Solomon, too, was king. Maybe his heart was more restless than his father's. Maybe he needed to see things for himself. Whatever the reason, Solomon went on a quest. He was determined, absolutely determined, to understand this thing we call life. His quest is recorded in a portion of Scripture we call Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes is a must read.

It's a slow read.

It's a read and reread.

If there ever was a person who understood the insatiable hunger for more that person was Solomon, and the place he records his thoughts and discoveries about this hunger is Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes opens with an identified purpose:

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I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. I devoted myself to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under heaven (Ecclesiastes 1:12-13).

The quest is begun. The king wishes to understand *all that is done under heaven*. What will he try?

He tried pleasure...

I thought in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless. "Laughter," I said, "is foolish. And what does pleasure accomplish?" I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was worthwhile for men to do under heaven during the few days of their lives (Ecclesiastes 2:1-3).

Pleasure left him wanting.

The insatiable hunger for more proved to be greater than pleasure and folly could deliver. Did he have fun? Sure, he had fun, but did it satisfy the longings of his heart? The answer is proved not just by his words but by his actions. He left this way of living in search of something more.

He tried achievement...

I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees... I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces... Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun (Ecclesiastes 2:4-6, 8, 11).

Achievement left him wanting.

As with pleasure, the insatiable hunger for more proved to be greater than the greatest achievements he could attain. Did he achieve much? It is said he was greater than anyone who had ever lived in Jerusalem (Ecclesiastes 2:9). Was this greatness great enough to satisfy the insatiable hunger for more? Here again, the answer is proved not just by his words but by his actions. He moved on to other things.

He tried education...

Then I turned my thoughts to consider wisdom, and also madness and folly. What more can the king's successor do than what has already been done? I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness. The wise man has eyes in his head, while the fool walks in the darkness; but I came to realize that the same fate overtakes them both. Then I thought in my heart, "The fate of the fool will overtake me also. What then do I gain by being wise?" I said in my heart, "This too is meaningless." For the wise man, like the fool, will not be long remembered; in days to come both will be forgotten. Like the fool, the wise man too must die! (Ecclesiastes 2:12-16).

Pleasure didn't do it.

Accomplishment didn't do it.

Now education doesn't do it either. Wisdom leaves him wanting.

The result?

So I hated life... (Ecclesiastes 2:17).

Hated life? That's strong.

Why?

...because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun (Ecclesiastes 2:17-18).

Extreme? Maybe.

Honest? Very.

Let's reflect on this. We'll catch up with Solomon on his quest in due course. For now, let's consider what he's discovered so far.

THE PURSUIT

What do we feel toward that thing that didn't deliver what we hoped it would deliver?

We dreamed it.

We sought it.

We worked for it.

We realized it.

We expected it to deliver *Level Ten* satisfaction. It came in at *Level Four*. We're disappointed. Very disappointed. It failed us.

We hate it.

We went to the next thing.

We hoped this one would improve upon the last. We're a bit more weathered. We didn't expect *Level Ten*. We'd settle for *Level Eight*.

The results came in.

We opened them slowly. We feared more disappointment.

Level Three. Not even close.

Maybe the next thing. This next thing would be the real thing. The next thing would give us what we really and truly wanted.

It came. It went.

We didn't even read the results. We knew they were not what we hoped they would be.

WHY MORE?

A moment ago we picked up a question to carry with us. We asked, why do we have an insatiable hunger for more? It's a critical question we'll ponder this week and next. For now, consider a thought. It's an important thought. Let it simmer a bit. Consider this thought through the lens of a series of questions.

This insatiable hunger for more, could it have something to do with the relationship between deep desires and surface desires? Could it be that our deep desires are not fully satisfied by the surface desires because our hearts are designed for something greater and grander than these surface desires are capable of being? Could it be that deep down we hope for something, long for something, search for something, and the surface desire we look to in an attempt to satisfy that deep desire proves inadequate?

And consider this...

Might this have something to do with David's one thing? Might the surprising brevity of his wish list, his one desire for God himself, have something to do with the realization that any other thing he would or could put on that list would ultimately prove inadequate, so he effectively scratched those things from the list and zeroed in on the one *being* who could satisfy the deepest longings of his heart?

Previously we considered God's competition. This was done by considering what we look to for ultimate security. What do we trust to be the security of our lives?

That's critical, but it's also incomplete.

There's more to *our hearts, our desires, our love* than finding security. The list could be quite long. There are many legitimate deep desires that are simply part of who we are.

What about purpose? We want lives that matter.

What about pleasure? We want to enjoy life.

What about the desire to be loved? We want to be embraced.

Yes, we look to something or someone for ultimate security. That's part of who we are. And yes, that thing or person to whom we look to for ultimate security is effectively our god. We get that.

But we also get this...

We don't just want a secure life. We want to live. We want to thrive. We want to experience. Peel back the layers of our hearts, and what do we discover?

Desire. Passion. Longing.

God-given desire, passion, and longing.

It's the way we're made. Our hearts are made to be "*the wellspring of life*" (Proverbs 4:23). This is not a wrong thing but a real thing. Desire is not meant to be suppressed but satisfied. When David penned his psalm he did not write, "*I ask God for nothing. I don't want a thing. It's wrong to have desire.*" To the contrary, he rifled through the long list of prospective objects of his desire, and he zeroed in on the one thing he was convinced would bring ultimate satisfaction.

He zeroed in on God himself.

And take note of something.

Take note that the first reason David gives for his one thing is not the desire for security but the desire for beauty. He wants to "*gaze upon the beauty of the LORD.*" Yes, he addresses his desire for security in the verses that follow, but first and foremost he mentions his deep longing for beauty, for pleasure. It's a deep desire, so deep it's given as explanation for the one thing David sought: God himself.

Is this odd?

Consider the common pursuit of beholding beauty in creation. We travel long distances, climb tall mountains, walk long trails, and seek secluded meadows. Why? Numerous reasons could be given, but no doubt one of them is this: We long for beauty and for pleasure. The rugged mountain climber and the delicate gardener have this in common: the pursuit of beauty and pleasure. One pursues pleasure by gazing upon the vastness of the mountain range from the vantage point of the highest peaks; the other pursues pleasure in the delicacy of a tiny petaled flower from the vantage point of a quiet corner garden. It is not a man-thing or a woman-thing; beauty and pleasure touch something deep within all of us. David longed for pleasure. We all, in one way or another, long for pleasure as well.

Which raises a question.

Why want God?

Why not write, "*One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek, to gaze upon the beauty of a vast mountain range...*"? If it's beauty he's after, this would make sense. Why not ask for countless sunsets, bountiful gardens, or star-filled nights?

Only David can speak for David, but common experience and complementary Scripture give a few clues. The beauty that surrounded David, as profound as it was and still is today, not only satisfied a hunger of his heart,

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but no doubt it also created a hunger in his heart. The experience is quite common. What happens when we taste food we love? We want more. A hunger for that food is simultaneously satisfied and created. What happens when we take in the beauty of a lakeside mountain? We want more. A hunger for the beauty of creation is simultaneously satisfied and created.

More?

Yes, more.

Why?

Bring back that question we're carrying with us. Why the insatiable hunger for more? David gives a clue in another place. In speaking of creation he writes something profound and intriguing: "*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge*" (Psalm 19:1-2).

David looks upon the stars, the *heavens*, and he says they declare the glory, or we might say here, *beauty*, of God. When he looks to the heavens, when he considers the vastness of the skies, they do not just proclaim their beauty within themselves, but they point to a Creator, and they pour forth speech about that Creator. They say something about God. They declare not just the beauty of creation, but the implied beauty of the Creator. David sees the vastness of the skies and the heavens, and he shakes his head in wonder, "*God must be marvelous! God must be wondrous! God must be astounding!*" The beauty he beholds simultaneously satisfies a hunger and creates a hunger, and David instinctively knows something.

He knows the deep hunger for beauty will not be fully satisfied by seas or sunsets.

He knows the deep hunger for beauty will only be fully satisfied by God himself.

Or put another way...

David *loves God with all his heart, soul, and strength* because to satisfy his passion for beauty in any lesser thing, to love a lesser thing with all his heart, soul, and strength, will just leave him wanting. God must be ultimate in his love, ultimate in his pursuit of pleasure. All else will only partially satisfy because that is what all else is designed to do. The creation is designed to point to the Creator, not be the Creator. The beauty that surrounds us is designed to simultaneously satisfy hunger and create hunger. Only God, and God alone, will bring complete fulfillment. Seek to fully satisfy that deep hunger for beauty through the many beautiful things that surround us, and we will be frustrated by the *tastes* of beauty rather than allowing them to point us to the ultimate satisfier of our heart's desires. David longed for one thing, and that one thing was God because he was convinced God and God alone would finally and fully deliver the complete satisfaction for which his heart longed.

What was god of David's longing for beauty and pleasure?

God was God of David's longing for beauty and pleasure.

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The search for ultimate security and the search for ultimate beauty are two examples of deep desires. The intent here is not to create a comprehensive list of our heart's desires. The intent is to carefully and prayerfully consider the one thing that will satisfy our heart's desires, and to gain insight into the many ways we seek to replace that one thing. With this in mind, hear a later contribution to Scripture. When Paul wrote to the church in Rome, central to humanity's problem, he described, is our propensity to "*worship and serve created things rather than the Creator*" (Romans 1:25). Translation? Among other things, we take our God-given desires, desires meant to be fully satisfied in God himself, and we zero in on lesser things. We get mesmerized with created things rather than allowing them to point us to the Creator of created things. The beauty of creation is wondrous and good, and it is meant to point us to the Creator. What happens when we treat the creation as if it were the Creator? We're left wanting.

More?

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Yes. More.

GOING DEEPER

It's time to peel back the layers of our hearts. It's time to not just talk about God, but talk with God. As you do so, consider the genuine desires of your heart and where those desires are ultimately directed.

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